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RIGHTS OF KOREANS IN JAPAN AFFIRMED



A symposium on the rights of Korean residents in Japan was held from Sept. 21 to 24 at Tozanso, Gotemba, under the sponsorship of the National Christian Council of Japan and the Korean Christian Churches in Japan. Attending the symposium were some 80 people, Korean and Japanese, from all over Japan who have been actively involved in the struggle for justice for the Korean residents in Japan. There were also a number of foreign participants. Representatives of the Korean National Council of Churches were unable to attend the meeting due to difficulties involved in obtaining exit permits from the ROK government. The symposium in its final statement said that it regretted this fact in light of the importance of the issue.

The significance of a meeting of this sort lies in the fact that 32 years after the end of war and 11 years after the Korea-Japan Treaty, Koreans in Japan still face enormous disabilities, legal and social, and continue to be forced to live amid handicaps and discrimination. Moreover, the division of their country has brought about a split among the Koreans in Japan. Most belong to two major groupings, Mindan and Soren, and this factor has contributed to the further sluggishness of the fundamental solution of the basic rights question faced by Koreans in Japan. More grave is the attitude of the Japanese and the Japanese government who continue to maintain a superiority complex and a discriminatory posture towards the Korean residents. This has barred the Koreans from awakening to their own identity.

The meeting was opened with an address by Dr. LEE In Ha of the Kawasaki Church, KCC, who referred among other things to the recent trends among Korean youths in their increasing consciousness about identity as over against the tendency towards integration. Dr. Lee emphasized the significance of a wave of struggles spearheaded by the Hitachi vs. Park case and jointly organized by Koreans and Japanese. The identity question was also touched upon by another keynote speaker, Rev. INUKAI Mitsuhiro. On the second day the symposium split into three working groups: residential rights, living rights and educational rights. Legal status or residential rights of the Koreans in Japan were dealt with by Rev. CHOI Chang Hwa and a lawyer, NAKADAIRA Kenkichi. Rev. Choi, who has been fighting court cases against NHK on the correct pronunciation of his Korean name and also supporting another Korean's case against the state on the confirmation of his Japanese nationality, proposed that legal provisions should somehow be established so that the Koreans could obtain Japanese nationality without being forcibly assimilated into Japanese society.

A similar point was also raised by Nakadaira, who is now acting as a defence lawyer for Mr. SHIN Kyong Hwan in a deportation case. Nakadaira went on to say that there is a moral responsibility on the part of the Japanese, who colonized

MORE

EDITORS: Subscriptions: JAPAN ¥2,700; OVERSEAS Seemail \$10.00 Airmail Asia \$11.00 other \$12.00

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Korea and forcibly brought the Korean people to Japan as forced labour, to guarantee the same social rights as the Japanese enjoy. He also emphasised that the deportation order under the Immigration Control Ordinance should be abolished so that the Koreans whose lives are rooted in Japan could enjoy a normal life without fear of being expelled. Shin Kyong Hwan is one of those Koreans who are fighting against the deportation order.

Both reporters of the living rights section, Messers. BAE Jung Do and SATO Katsumi, touched on the identity question and further elaborated it. Bae stressed the importance of looking closer into the actual living situation of Koreans rather than talking of identity in abstract terms or simply in terms of identity with their mother country. Koreans in Japan should have their own identity, said he. Both speakers also warned the participants of the recent trends within the Immigration authorities to strengthen the policies of naturalization and integration. This tendency is seen as the "integration or expulsion" policy. In this context they criticised the Korean residents' organizations for their neglect of the basic rights issues of the Koreans in Japan whose life has been greatly absorbed into Japanese society, and yet who face severe restrictions and discrimination. In their opinion Koreans in Japan should be given the same social insurance and welfare benefits as those enjoyed by Japanese.

In the field of education IIDA Tadashi, himself principal of a high school, gave a talk from the point of view of his own experiences as a teacher. He referred to activities carried out by a group of teachers in Osaka who were critical of the trend in the public education system which in effect helps deepen the process of integration by depriving Korean children of the opportunity to be aware of their own identity. What those teachers are trying to do is to encourage strongly Korean children and parents to use their genuine Korean names in place of conventional Japanese names which they adopted for the purpose of concealing their Korean identity, fearing unreasonable discrimination. "Kunta Kinte" understood that his name is the base of his own identity.

The statement, which was unanimously adopted on the last day, affirmed the identity of the Koreans in Japan as the very base for tackling the various problems, and also made a number of demands to the Japanese government. Those demands include the following points: legal status of second and third generation Koreans in Japan should be firmly established, legal provisions should be made so as to avoid expulsion from Japan, overseas travel by the Koreans in Japan should be facilitated, educational rights should be established so that Korean children have a chance to receive their own indigenous education, social insurance and welfare benefits should be guaranteed at the same level enjoyed by Japanese.

The symposium in its final statement also urged the formation at a national level of a study group on Koreans' rights in Japan to further clarify the issues raised at the meeting and to promote the powers of the Koreans by transcending the ideological barrier.

In that hospital
There are many old men and old women
Lying diapered in their beds.

Open holes of severe bedsores
Look like the mouths of volcanic
eruptions.
"Oh, what a shame! What a shame!"

Even a little help in rearranging
their sheets....
Their eyes were shining
With gratitude.

Lying diapered in their beds
The grandpa and grandma!
Christmas is coming very soon.

For their presents,
Sweet candies and bean paste
cookies.

Rather, they said,
"Give us warm words and helping
hands."

by Mrs. SUZUKI Ito
translation AYC

Interview: Rev. KOSON Srisang
THAI CHURCH LEADER VISITS JAPAN

(Rev. KOSON Srisang, former general secretary of the Church of Christ in Thailand stopped over in Japan briefly on his way to the United States with his family. While here, he granted JCAN the following interview.--Eds.)

JCAN : First tell us about the present situation in Thailand.

KOSON: The era when several hundred victims of the Student Revolution of Oct. 14, 1973 were adored as national heroes had lasted for three years. Now there is even a tendency to label them as national traitors. The rumor that the rightist regime established after the Oct. 6, 1976 "Bloody Wednesday" would hardly last for a year was proven to be right when on Oct. 20 this year another coup d'etat brought down the Thanin regime. Both coups, however, were initiated by one and the same group of military generals. General Kriangsak, the supreme commander of the Thai military, himself became prime minister and is claiming to normalize the situation. It is feared that all powers are controlled by the military personnel in all aspects of policy-making bodies.

JCAN : What about the situation of the 18 defendants of the Oct. 6 incident?

KOSON: A military trial for them is taking place. But it may be that the voices, both national and international, which requested that the trial be held in civilian court with due legal defense provided had some impact on the authorities, because just recently they announced that the defendants be allowed to have lawyers to defend their case. There is now a movement to request general amnesty for all political prisoners on the King's birthday on Dec. 5, but these people so far are not included. Former prime minister KUKRIT recently wrote an open letter in which he suggested that the court drop all charges against them except that of lese-majeste. Since the lese-majeste case can only be tried in civil court, this means that he is demanding that these people be tried in the civil courts. It is important to raise an international voice for the human rights of these defendants.

JCAN : Please explain about the Coordinating Group of Religions in Society (CGRS).

KOSON: The concerned leaders of Buddhist, Catholic and Protestant religions established the group formally in the spring of this year. It is acting for the defense of human rights of Thai people. It is very difficult to be engaged in this kind of movement in Thailand today, but so far CGRS remains the only official organization which can act openly. We write letters to the King as well as to the prime minister to request amnesty for political prisoners. We support the legal defense of the victims. We are thankful that the Japan NCC is trying to respond to one of our appeals, that is, to find a group of persons who would raise 7,000 yen per month to support the families of the detainees.

JCAN : The Kyodan is sending Rev. MOCHIZUKI Kenichiro to Chiangmai.

KOSON: He is very much respected by all Thai people who know him. He is one of the best supporters of my position. His term ends next spring, and already his students are planning to have a special farewell service commemorating his life of service in Thailand. But I want to say that the whole Thai church is hopeful that he may be able to extend his term and stay there for a longer period.

JCAN : Why did you resign as general secretary of the Church of Christ in Thailand?

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KOSON: I wrote an open letter to the prime minister requesting him to give those defendants of the Oct. 6 incident a trial in a civilian court rather than one by a military tribunal. It created criticism in my church. Many people said I should not have gotten involved in politics. The church's general council declared that my action was wrong. To decide whether I should remain in office or not, an extraordinary general assembly was scheduled to be held next January. But when I came back from an overseas trip recently, I found out that much anonymous hate mail was circulating. When these letters began to attack even my two daughters, age 12 and 7, I decided it was enough. For the health of my church I submitted my resignation and it was accepted. But I think this experience was a very good lesson for our church. I am going to stay in Princeton, N.J. for at least a year as a visiting fellow at the seminary.

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State Depends on Private Institutions EDUCATION IN JAPAN A TWO-PRONGED SYSTEM

Of the population of approximately 113 million in Japan, 25 million are enrolled in various educational institutions. Over the last 15 years approximately 6 per cent of the national income has been used to support public and private education. The amount has increased in rough proportion to the increase in national income with the highest percentage being 6.3 per cent in 1965.

Compulsory education in Japan extends from the first grade through the ninth grade though the Ministry of Education (ME) has a "Kindergarten Education Promotion Plan" designed to have all four and five year-olds enrolled in kindergarten by 1982, if their parents desire. In 1975, 86.3 per cent of children five years of age were in kindergartens or day nurseries with 67.7 per cent attending private institutions.

The fact that over 90 per cent of those completing compulsory education continue into high school indicates that in the minds of much of the populace compulsory education extends through high school. However the ME (through prefectural organizations) supplies space for only 69.8 per cent of the high school student population. The remaining 30.2 per cent of the spaces are provided by private (including Christian) schools. The government supports private high schools financially to a certain degree. In 1973, 14.8 per cent of private school income was from government sources. The figure was 3.8 per cent in 1965. In Japan, 38.4 per cent of high school graduates continued on to higher education in 1975. Only 22.3 per cent of those in 4 year colleges and universities are women. (There was a slight drop to 37.7 per cent in 1977 of the percentage of high school graduates continuing their education. It appears that the percentage of applicants for 1978 will also decrease.)

In 1975, 77.3 per cent of the students at college level were in private institutions. This represents a significant increase from the 60.0 per cent attending private higher education in 1960. It seems that the government will continue to depend on the private sector to meet the increasing demands for higher education. (While the percentage of applicants from among graduates is decreasing the overall number of applicants is increasing.) However, government aid goes to institutions of higher education as in the case of other private educational institutions. The figures for 1973 and 1965 were 10.8 per cent and 2.1 per cent respectively of the budgets of private colleges and universities.

Japan of course is not unique in exercising in various ways control over the educational process--particularly the period of compulsory education. One area of concern expressed by many arises out of a fear that the educational process will be used to develop obedient servants of the state and industry; in relation to the interpretation of Japan's past, serious questions are being raised.

Since the post-war occupation of Japan there has been a move by the ME to secure more complete control over textbook production. The most recent in the chain of events involved verbal instructions concerning the selection and interpretation of events in World War II in a 5th grade social studies textbook. "Don't criticize the war, and praise those who serve the Emperor," the ME is reported to have instructed a textbook publisher.

When public kindergartens are not available many prefectures support private kindergarten education by reimbursing parents a part of their expenses. This raises the question of church-state relations in government support of the churches' education ministry. (Even some theological seminaries receive support from the ME since they are accredited educational institutions.) The alternative to government support of these kindergartens would be that only higher income parents could afford to enroll their children.

On the elementary and junior high level, Christian institutions provide so few spaces for the compulsory education component that they need not be dealt with here.

The importance of the supplement by Christian schools to government educational offerings at high school level varies from prefecture to prefecture. In some prefectures it is difficult to fill the classrooms, while in prefectures with a recent large increase in population the Christian schools make a valuable contribution to meeting educational needs which the government does not fulfill. Christian schools provide 10.9 per cent of the total private educational offerings (3.3 per cent of the total). Since they must charge a higher tuition than public high schools they supply educational opportunities only to those who can afford to pay higher tuition.

Some Christian schools can be very selective of students since they have a good reputation while others have to accept students who did not pass public high school entrance examinations. Frequently the performance of high schools is evaluated in terms of the number of graduates who get into "quality" universities though some schools seek to provide education that is not university preparatory.

At the higher education level, where the government provides only 22.6 per cent of the student spaces, Christian institutions provide 9.8 percent of the total. In a country where church membership is less than 1 per cent of the total population it is obvious that a large portion of the resources of the Christian population are being used in education. Yet it needs to be pointed out that, except for some theological education institutions, church financial support and formal control is usually absent.

New Students Entering Colleges and Universities

Government		Private	
	1960	1975	
Male	164	280	354
Female	31	78	50
Junior College			
Male	11	15	15
Female	6	16	50

Unit: 1,000 students

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SEX DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

However much women's legal status has been guaranteed on paper, discrimination against women stubbornly exists and prevents new images of equality. The recent publication by the National Office for Women and Children of the Labor Department pointed out various types of sex discrimination in society.

When local government offices hired people for repairing roadsides or taking care of the public forest grounds, men were paid equally regardless of age. But regardless of age, women were paid between 50 and 80 per cent of the men's wages.

Membership in fishermen's and farmers' associations is limited to men. However much women's labor is used, women cannot become members of these associations. This means that women do not have any voting rights in the operation of the association.

As another example, a female lawyer was refused entrance into a tunnel with another male lawyer during inspections related to legal proceedings. The reason given was that if women went into the tunnel, it would bring bad luck to the other workers in the tunnel, according to popular belief.

After a long talk with the Japanese National Railways, which claims to be proud of its modern technology, at last the woman lawyer was permitted to go into the tunnel--after all the other workers were out of the tunnel.

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from Asahi Shimbun, Dec. 6, '77
translated by AYC

(continued from page 5)

One of the serious problems in Japanese Christian secondary and higher education is how, or whether, the church and Christian schools will be related in mission in Japan. At the national level there is no functioning formal relation between the two major organizations in Japan dealing with Protestant schools and the national denominations. However, many schools do have meaningful church relations at local and regional levels!

The distinctiveness and mission of Christian higher education is an important issue that is receiving inadequate formal attention.

Although some institutions are involved in dealing with issues of social justice both in Japan and in Japan's relation to the international scene, data is not available concerning the degree and types of involvement.

Education in the churches (Sunday schools and other church education activities, primarily for children) must compete with the many prep-schools and other "educational" activities. Attendance in Sunday schools is reported to be stable though formal data is not now available from many denominations. Some suggest that the stagnant state of Sunday schools is not unrelated to the poor relations between Christian schools and the church.

(The material for this article comes from Educational Standards in Japan--1975, prepared by the Ministry of Education, the Christian Schools Council's Kamei Gakko Meibou--1975, statistics of the Roman Catholic Register--1973, and recent news reports. Compiled by the Christian Education department of NCCJ.)

CORRECTION--In the first page article in the last issue of JCAN("Hedging on the divinity issue: Emperor System...."), the first line should have read as ff: On Aug. 23 of this year at Nasu summer resort, Emperor Hirohito said, "The negation.... In addition, the author's name was inadvertently omitted. The article was written by Rev. TOMURA Masahiro of Asakusa Hokubu Church, Kyodan. We deeply regret these errors.--Eds.